United Nations A/67/130

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 July 2012
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Sixty-seventh session
Item 95 (q) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Colombia	2
	Cuba	2
	Iraq	4
	Lebanon	5
	Qatar	5
	Syrian Arab Republic	6
	Turkey	7

* A/67/50.

12-41299 (E) 160712 170712

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. On 2 December 2011, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/31, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control". In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the General Assembly invited all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they have adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the resolution and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report containing that information to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

2. Pursuant to that request, on 16 February 2012, a note verbale was sent to Member States inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Additional replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2012]

Colombia remains fully committed to the observance of all international standards in environmental conservation within the framework of agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. Accordingly, in international and regional forums, as in the bilateral sphere, when such agreements are mooted or discussed, it will maintain the goal of ensuring the preservation of the environment.

Colombia is a country that ensures compliance with the related domestic norms and international commitments.

We may therefore state, following consultations in the relevant areas, that Colombia will continue to support the goals set out under General Assembly resolution 66/31.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[27 March 2012]

Cuba reaffirms the importance of the strict observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control and shares the position adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that, in international disarmament forums, full account should be taken of the relevant environmental norms in the negotiation of international treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms control.

Cuba ensures strict compliance with these norms in all aspects of social life, including in the implementation of related international instruments to which it is a party, such as, in particular: the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba has vast experience in adopting and implementing laws and policies that enable it to observe environmental norms. It has a solid legal foundation for the protection of the environment:

- Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba incorporates the concept of sustainable development.

- Act No. 81/1997 on the environment lays down the principles that underpin Cuba's environmental policy, stating, inter alia: "Managing the environment is a comprehensive and cross-cutting endeavour; it involves the coordinated participation of State bodies, other entities and institutions, society and the citizenry as a whole, each in keeping with its respective mandates and abilities".

- Decree-Law No. 207 entitled "On the use of nuclear energy" establishes the general rules for such activities.

- Decree No. 208 entitled "On the national accountability and control system for nuclear materials" establishes the regulations for the operation of the system with the aim of promoting efficient management of such materials and detecting their unauthorized use, loss or movement.

- The legal regime governing biosecurity and the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention is reflected in: Decree-Law No. 199/90, entitled "On biological security", resolution No. 2/2004 of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), entitled "Regulation on accountability and control of biological materials, equipment and related technology", the most recent update of the "List of biological agents that affect humans, animals and plants" and the "Regulation granting authorizations in the field of biological security". The latter two are contained in CITMA resolutions Nos. 38/2006 and 18/2007.

- Decree-Law No. 202/1999 regulates implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention at the national level.

- Agreement 5517 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of 2005, entitled "On contraventions resulting from violation of the rules of the Chemical Weapons Convention", rounded out the legislative measures needed to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Of the nearly 23,000 nuclear weapons currently existing in the world, each incomparably more powerful than those that cast a pall over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it would take no more than about a hundred to usher in a nuclear winter that would in a short space of time cause the death of all human beings and destroy the earth's environment.

The mere existence of such weapons and their ongoing development are among the most serious threats to international peace and security and to the fragile environmental balance of the planet, already endangered by the disastrous effects of climate change.

The only effective solution that can prevent the dire consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction remains the total elimination of such weapons.

It is important to highlight the relevance and importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, ratified by Cuba on 10 April 1978, which remains fully in force and should be universally accepted.

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[31 May 2012]

Iraq is well aware of the importance of problems related to pollution of the environment and, in particular, that caused by military operations and the weapons used in such operations. The effect of those operations was manifest in Iraq after the first and second Gulf wars and the events of 2003, all of which had a huge environmental impact, caused by the destruction of military institutions and installations related to armament programmes. In order to eliminate that pollution and its deleterious impact on human beings and the environment, huge material and large numbers of human resources are required.

The Government of Iraq has taken many measures to curb the effects of that pollution, including the following:

First: National environment-related legislation:

1. The Iraqi Constitution, article 9, paragraph 5, provides that the Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production, and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies, and delivery systems for use in the development, manufacture, production, and use of such weapons. Iraq remains committed to its undertakings and continues to cooperate with the relevant international institutions and organizations with a view to limiting the impact of environmental pollution in general and that resulting from former armament programmes.

2. The Iraqi Penal Code, Law No. 111 of 1969, provides general protection and respect for the human environment in articles 479, 488, 491, 497 and 499, all of which provide protection for aspects of the environment.

3. The Ministry of the Environment Law, No. 38 of 2008.

4. The Law on the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Second: International instruments which Iraq has ratified, some of the most important of which include the following:

1. Pursuant to Law No. 42 of 2007, Iraq ratified the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, which was signed on 22 March 1985 in Vienna, and the 2007 Montreal Adjustment.

2. The 2008 Law on ratification of the revised International Health Regulations which were agreed by the twenty-eighth session of the World Health Assembly in 2005.

3. The 2008 Law concerning the accession of the Republic of Iraq to the Convention on Biological Diversity which was signed in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

4. In view of the importance of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Iraq ratified that Convention and its ratification entered into force on 31 July 2011.

The most important institutions in the field of the environment and disarmament include the following:

1. The increasing importance of the environment and ever-increasing problems of pollution have been given due consideration by the Government of Iraq, which promulgated Law No. 38 of 2008, pursuant to which the Ministry of the Environment was established. The Ministry has issued a set of instructions, arrangements and measures aimed at curbing the negative impact of pollution or reducing it to internationally acceptable levels, in accordance with national legislation and international standards.

2. The Ministry of Science and Technology is taking continuous action to clean up polluting installations and facilities and has numerous plans and projects to prevent all types of pollution and introduce means and treatments appropriate to the nature of the pollution.

3. Iraq has accorded high priority to complying with international non-proliferation standards, and has established the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. It is also concerned with controlling dual-use materials that enter the country and ensuring that Iraqi territory is not used for related purposes.

4. The Iraqi Radioactive Sources Regulatory Authority controls such sources in order to ensure their safe usage.

While Iraq does not currently possess any weapons that have an impact on the environment, it renews its commitment to all the international instruments relating to disarmament and non-proliferation and others relating to mankind and the environment.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[18 April 2012]

Lebanon possesses no weapons that have an impact on or are detrimental to the environment and supports the agreements on disarmament, arms control and the observance of environmental norms. It is, however, deeply concerned by Israel's possession and maintenance of a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, which could be very harmful to the environment, even if they are not used.

Qatar

[Original: English]
[16 April 2012]

In implementing disarmament agreements, the State of Qatar ensures the achievement of scientific and technological progress without damaging the environment, by adopting the following measures:

1. The Government of the State of Qatar created the National Committee for Arms Control, which includes a representative from the Ministry of Environment, was established in accordance with Ministerial decree 26/2004.

2. The Government of the State of Qatar enacted environmental Law 21/2002, which defines the pollutants that are not allowed to be exceeded in the natural ingredients of the environment (water, air and soil).

3. The Government of the State of Qatar enacted Law 31/2002 on protection against radiation and the development of standards and requirements of prevention.

4. The Government of the State of Qatar established monitoring stations for early detection of radiation.

5. The Government of the State of Qatar enacted Law 17/2007 on chemical weapons.

6. The Government of the State of Qatar subjected the handling of chemicals and biological materials to environmental standards.

7. The issuance of licences to facilities requires the agreement of several administrations, especially the Ministry of Environment.

8. The Government of the State of Qatar created the Division of Environmental Security within the armed forces.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]
[29 May 2012]

1. The munitions on hand in the Ordnance Directorate have no impact on the environment. They consist of normal, traditional ammunition for light arms, artillery and tanks.

2. Expired (out-of-date) or outdated munitions are either dismantled or detonated.

3. Dismantling is carried out in secure, fortified buildings prepared for that purpose, account being taken of all recommended environmental measures.

4. Detonation, which is used for munitions that cannot be destroyed by dismantling, is carried out in open pits in uninhabited, non-agricultural areas of open desert far from grazing lands and nature preserves and does not affect natural and underground water sources. Such areas, which are protected and closed to persons not employed in them, are selected in coordination with the relevant ministries and public institutions, including the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment.

5. In this method of destruction, care is taken to ensure that the explosion results in the smallest possible quantity of residue. All the residue resulting from the detonation operation is collected and buried in deep pits.

Turkey

[Original: English]
[30 May 2012]

Measures adopted by Turkey in order to ensure disarmament without detrimental effects to nature and human health and compliance with environmental norms are as follows:

- The Turkish Armed Forces endures the compatibility of military activities with environmental legislation. Military activities are subject to the Turkish Armed Forces Directive on Environmental Control (MY 433-5). The output and disposal process of any military equipment and waste is subject to the Waste Control Directive (MSY 433-2).

- Surplus arms are disposed in accordance with the environmental norms at the Turkish Armed Forces Plant for Ammunition Disposal and Sorting, built to NATO standards.

- Turkey complies with the relevant international documents such as the Ottawa Convention as well as United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe documents on small arms and light weapons, while destroying and disposing of surplus military equipment and ammunition. The surplus equipment and ammunition are dismantled without detriment to the environment, the explosive parts being separated, while TNT and metal scraps are recycled and remanufactured.

- The process of burning and destruction of explosive material is carried out in closed systems, thereby ensuring that dangerous combustion gases are filtered and toxic waste and gases are prevented from spreading to the environment.

- Following the separation process, TNT or class B explosives are melted in closed systems to a certain level of purity and reused. Through this process hazardous substances are recycled without any harm to the environment or human health.

- Metal wastes are pressed in hydraulic presses and precious metals, such as copper and aluminium with a high economic value, are sorted and recycled or remanufactured as a contribution to the national economy.

The destruction process of the stocked anti-personnel landmines was completed in November 2010 at the Turkish Armed Forces Plant for Ammunition Disposal and Sorting, while the anti-personnel landmines containing depleted uranium were destroyed in Germany in August 2011.